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LASER DISC TECHNOLOGY ALLOWS QUICK ACCESS TO USDA PHOTOS

WASHINGTON—Imagine storing a warehouse full of photographs in a space barely big enough for a phonograph record. Now imagine being able to retrieve photographs from that collection in seconds. Three employees of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Agricultural Library have put together a system to do just this.

NAL employees Al Fusonie, Ron Young and Bill Hauser have developed two laser discs which contain 50,000 U.S. agriculture and forestry images dating back over 100 years. Theodosia Thomas, chief of USDA's photography division, helped with the project.

"For years, we have been looking for ways to protect our photographs from excessive wear," said Thomas. "When I read about laser discs, I thought they might be the answer."

The discs are about the size of long-playing phonograph records and contain black-and-white photographs, color slides, botanical illustrations and television public service advertisements. Using computer software developed by a private company, individual images can be located in seconds and displayed on a television screen.

"This technology allows access to a huge, beautiful collection of agricultural photographs," said Fusonie, head of the NAL special collections unit. "In the past, many photographs weren't used because a person grew tired of thumbing through our files. Now, with the disc system, a person can type in a few key words, let's say 'plow horse,' and in seconds see every plow horse picture we have and get information on ordering copies of them."

Fusonie said the system works to protect photographs by eliminating the need to touch them when perusing the files.

"Some of these photographs date back more than 100 years," Fusonie said. "They are delicate, yet they have tremendous historical value and should continue to be used in illustrating articles and books. The laser discs cut down on their handling, extending their useful lives."

Ron Young thinks the discs will create awareness that the photographs are available. "Because access to the photos has been improved, we

expect them to be used more often and seen by more people. This will increase demand for them. It's a snowball effect, which we welcome," he said.

Young said that with the right equipment, copies of the photographs can be printed from the discs and the quality of the print would be good enough to use in many publications.

"A person could also download images from the disc using 35mm instant film," Young said. "Imagine how these capabilities could be used by editors. Thousands of photographs, literally at their fingertips."

Presently, the men are working to refine the filing of videotapes and motion picture film on laser discs. The prototype disc developed in 1988 included award-winning television public service advertisements in addition to photographs. The advertisement can be played from the laser disc or a copy made onto videotape.

Young said that a key component of the system is a privately developed computer software which contains a synonym-based thesaurus, allowing the system to make "logical decisions" when searching for photographs.

"If you want to see what pictures of streams we have in our files, for example, you enter the term 'stream,'" Young said. "The software will search for photographs under 'stream,' 'brook,' 'creek' and probably others."

This software containing the synonym-based thesaurus is available commercially. The disc system, consisting of the disc and the database is being sold by the Federal Computer Product Center of the National Technical Information Service (NTIS). The disc and database for the "Photographic Collection of the U.S. Department of Agriculture" sell for \$445. The "Special Collection: Forest Service Photographs" disc sells for \$95; the "picture record" sells for \$400. The address of NTIS is 5285 Port Royal Road, Springfield, ■a. 22161; telephone (703) 321-4807. Information needed to order photographs is contained on the discs.

Brian Norris (301) 344-3778
Issued: July 26, 1990

#

THE LINK BETWEEN DIET OR GROUNDWATER AND CANCER RISK BETTER DEFINED

WASHINGTON, July 26—In a few years, physicians and scientists may have a more precise tool to assess how diet or chemicals in groundwater influence a person's or population's risk of developing certain cancers, a U.S. Department of Agriculture scientist said today.

A French-developed test—which measures genetic damage in special bacteria—has been adapted “to indicate an increased potential for colon and possibly other types of cancer from the type of diet,” said Padmanabhan P. Nair of USDA's Agricultural Research Service.

If the new technique continues to prove reliable in further studies, “it should give physicians a more solid basis for advising individuals to modify their diet,” said Nair in the latest issue of Agricultural Research magazine.

“And it should enable scientists to survey large populations and develop a national map showing relative risk rates in various geographic areas.”

Nair led a group of researchers in adapting the SOS Chromotest, currently being used in Europe to screen industrial chemicals, to study how dietary fat influences risk of cancer. The test uses a genetically engineered *E. coli* bacterium to measure breakage, or mutations, of DNA. This is a necessary step in the transition of cells from a normal to a malignant state, he said.

He is also working with ARS environmental chemists to assess groundwater samples for their ability to cause mutations. The samples are being analyzed for pesticides and other organic pollutants, including natural compounds, as part of USDA's five-year initiative to protect groundwater.

Similar tests, such as the Ames test, distinguish chemicals that cause mutations (mutagens) from those that don't. But they don't indicate the amount of breakage, said Nair, a biochemist with the Beltsville, Md., Human Nutrition Research Center.

To assess the effects of diet, he and assistants Samina Shami and Eduardo Sainz extract known mutagens from human stools and apply the extract to *E. coli* bacteria, which signal the degree of mutation by the intensity of blue color produced.

When 31 women in a controlled dietary study had their fat intake cut in half—from 40 to 20 percent of calories—their stool extracts produced

only half as many mutations, said Nair. Current studies of stool extracts from men are yielding similar results.

“While mutations don’t automatically lead to cancer, we believe they clearly increase the risk. This has been established in animals but is still under study with humans.”

Nair had earlier directed a five-year study of diet and cancer incidence comparing vegetarians, who ate less than 30 percent fat, with the general population living in Los Angeles. The study showed that high-fat diets prompt intestinal microorganisms to produce more secondary bile acids, which are part of the fatty mutagens in stools. Also, the study found that the level of these acids is a good indicator of risk for colon cancer.

He predicted that testing stool sample extracts may also prove to be a good indicator of risk of breast and other cancers. That’s because fatty mutagens in the colon can be reabsorbed and deposited in the breast and other organs having fatty tissue, he said. And most cancers occur in cells similar to those that line the colon.

He hopes to train health-care faculty from universities and medical schools how to achieve accurate results with the screening test. They, in turn, can teach colleagues and students.

“We should be able to project how a change in diet will change risk,” he said. “We’ve done it in the lab, but we need to test it nationally.”

Diet is only one aspect of risk, he said. Others include heredity, factors that activate foreign cancer-promoting genes present in human cells, and exposure to cigarette smoke and other environmental carcinogens.

Nair said the SOS Chromotest was developed at the Pasteur Institute in France primarily to screen industrial compounds for mutagenicity. So he introduced the test to environmental chemist Jack R. Plimmer at the ARS Environmental Chemistry Laboratory in Beltsville. Plimmer was looking for a way to assess groundwater for cancer risk.

Nair’s group is measuring mutagenicity of groundwater samples collected from selected locations, while Plimmer’s group is analyzing the samples for total carbon—the backbone of all organic compounds.

Plimmer’s lab also will analyze for pesticides and other carbon-containing pollutants. “This test correlates very positively with mutagenicity,” he said.

With \$45.4 million in new appropriations to protect groundwater, USDA recently launched a five-year plan to reduce the presence of pesticides and fertilizer. Doral Kemper, who oversees ARS’ soil

management research, said if groundwater were tested nationwide, then a national map of mutagenicity could be developed.

He said such testing could gauge the risk posed by pesticides against that posed by natural compounds. According to ARS water analysts, pesticides account for less than one percent of all organic compounds in groundwater, lakes and streams.

Bruce Ames of the University of California, Berkeley, developer of the Ames test, has concluded that natural compounds in water are about as likely to cause mutations as man-made compounds.

Kemper said that filtration plants remove many of these organic compounds from city water.

The SOS test is based on the rationale that mutations, or DNA breakage, can lead to malignancy, Nair said.

Before a normal cell can become a cancer cell, he explained, inactive cancer-promoting genes known as protooncogenes have to be cut and spliced into active oncogenes. "That's like rearranging the garbled letters of an anagram to spell a word that makes sense."

The more breaks in the DNA, the greater the chance the dormant protooncogenes will be rearranged into active oncogenes as the huge molecules are spliced back together.

In the SOS Chromotest, the genetically engineered E. coli bacteria signal DNA repair by activating an enzyme that generates a blue color, he said. Since the strength of the color is proportional to the amount of enzyme produced, the tester can measure breakage by using a color standard produced with a known mutagen.

Within the next year, Nair hopes to add other tests for assessing the total risk profile for cancer. "The adapted chromotest is only one quarter of the total picture," he said.

Others involved in the research include Joseph T. Judd and George P. Albaugh of the Agricultural Research Service, and Lois B. Jerabek, Masantha Iyengar, Samina Shami and Althaf Lohani of The Johns Hopkins University.

Judy McBride (301) 344-4095

#

USDA ANNOUNCES PREVAILING WORLD MARKET PRICE FOR UPLAND COTTON

WASHINGTON, July 26—Under Secretary of Agriculture Richard T. Crowder today announced the prevailing world market price, adjusted to U.S. quality and location (adjusted world price), for Strict Low Middling (SLM) 1-1/16 inch (micronaire 3.5-4.9) upland cotton (base quality) and the coarse count adjustment.

Because both current shipment prices and forward shipment prices for “coarse count” cotton C.I.F. northern Europe are available, this period will begin the transition period for using forward shipment “coarse count” prices in the Coarse Count Adjustment. In computing this week’s Northern Europe coarse count price, the current price will be given twice the weight as the forward price.

Because the 1990 marketing year begins Aug. 1, the adjusted world price (AWP) for July 27 through July 31 is calculated using the 1989-crop price support loan schedule of premiums and discounts. The AWP for Aug. 1 and the remainder of the 1990 marketing year will be calculated using the price support loan schedule of premiums and discounts in effect for the 1990 crop of upland cotton.

Based on data for the week ending July 26, the AWP and the coarse count adjustment in effect from 12:01 a.m. Friday, July 27, through midnight Tuesday, July 31, are determined as follows:

Adjusted World Price

Northern Europe Price	82.98
Adjustments:	
Average U.S. spot market location	13.36
SLM 1-1/16 inch cotton	2.20
Average U.S. location	0.39
Sum of Adjustments	<u>-15.95</u>
ADJUSTED WORLD PRICE	67.03 cents/lb.

Coarse Count Adjustment

Northern Europe Price	82.98
Northern Europe Coarse Count Price	<u>-82.96</u>
	0.02
Adjustment to SLM 1-inch cotton	<u>-4.75</u>
	-4.73
COARSE COUNT ADJUSTMENT	0 cents/lb.

Since the AWP in effect for Aug. 1 through Aug. 2 is above the 1988, 1989, and 1990-crop base quality loan rates of 51.80, 50.00, and 50.27 cents per pound, respectively, the loan repayment rates in effect for the 1988, 1989, and 1990 crops of upland cotton during this period are equal to the loan rates adjusted for the specific quality and location. The AWP will continue to be used to determine the value of upland cotton that is obtained in exchange for commodity certificates.

Because the AWP in effect for Aug. 1 through Aug. 2 is above the 1990-crop loan rate, loan deficiency payments are not available for 1990-crop upland cotton sold during this period.

The next AWP and coarse count adjustment announcement will be made Aug. 2.

Charles Cunningham (202) 447-7954

#

USDA SEIZES ABANDONED EXOTIC ANIMALS IN PUERTO RICO

WASHINGTON, July 27—The U.S. Department of Agriculture today announced it has seized four exotic animals that were abandoned by the Royal Palace Circus at a site near Anasco, Puerto Rico.

“On July 6, our investigators, responding to public complaints, determined that two lions and two tigers had been abandoned in a park without food or water or adequate supervision by circus employees. These animals were suffering, and they posed a potential danger to the public,” said James W. Glosser, administrator of USDA’s Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service.

The animals were transported to the Puerto Rican National Zoo, 15 miles away in Mayaguez and placed under the custody of zoo officials there to receive proper veterinary care. A case against circus owner Rafael Diaz Leonelli has been referred to USDA’s Office of the General Counsel for prosecution for failure to comply with the Animal Welfare Act.

The Animal Welfare Act mandates standards for the care and treatment of certain animals. Animals protected by the law must be provided adequate housing, handling, sanitation, food, water, transportation, veterinary care and protection against extremes of weather and

temperature. The law covers animals that are sold wholesale as pets, used for biomedical research, or exhibited.

Rangers from the Puerto Rican Department of Natural Resources assisted APHIS personnel with the seizure.

Sibyl Bowie (301) 436-7255

#

USDA SCHEDULES PUBLIC MEETINGS ON ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT OF MEDFLY ERADICATION

WASHINGTON, July 27—A series of public meetings has been scheduled to discuss the environmental impact of the Medfly Cooperative Eradication Program, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service.

After public input, an environmental impact statement will be prepared to analyze potential environmental effects of various Medfly control activities.

The meetings will be held on Sept. 11 at the Datsun Ranch Inn, 1644 S. Dobson, Mesa, Ariz.; Sept. 13 at the Robert E. Lee Youth Center, 600 International Blvd., Brownsville, Texas; Sept. 18. at the Sheridan Plaza-La Reina, 6101 W. Century Blvd., Los Angeles, Calif.; Sept 20 at the Le Baron Hotel, 1350 N. First St., San Jose, Calif.; Sept. 25 at the Holiday Inn-Oceanside, 2201 Collins Ave., Miami, Fla.; and Oct. 9 at USDA, South Building, Jefferson Auditorium, 14th St. and Independence Ave., S.W., Washington, D.C. Details on the meetings are published in today's Federal Register.

The deadline for comments on the potential environmental impact of the Medfly Eradication Program was extended from Aug. 21 to Nov. 9, to accommodate the meetings and additional comments which may be generated.

An original and three copies of comments, referring to docket no. 90-108, may be sent to Michael T. Werner, Deputy Director, Environmental Documentation, Biotechnology, Biologics, and Environmental Protection, APHIS, USDA, Room 828, Federal Building, 6505 Belcrest Road, Hyattsville, Md. 20782.

Comments received may be inspected at USDA, Rm. 1141-S., 14th Street and Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C., between 8 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, except holidays.

Amichai Heppner (301) 436-5222

#

USDA REVISES COUNTRY, COMMODITY PUBLIC LAW 480 ALLOCATIONS FOR FISCAL 1990

WASHINGTON, July 27—The U.S. Department of Agriculture today issued revised country and commodity allocations for the fourth quarter of fiscal 1990 under Title I and Title III of Public Law 480, the Food for Peace Program.

Under Secretary of Agriculture Richard Crowder said current program plans under Titles I/III provide for distribution of \$740.6 million in commodity shipments through long-term concessional sales. The amount is down from \$808.7 million in the third quarter due to transfers of funds to the P.L. 480 Title II budget to support food aid grants and for Food for Progress programming.

Of the current \$740.6 million for Titles I/III, \$725.6 million has been allocated, while \$15.0 million is being held in a reserve to furnish commodities for unforeseen needs during the remainder of the fiscal year.

Since the third quarter, new Title I/III concessional financing agreements have been signed with Bolivia, Costa Rica, Cote d'Ivoire, Guatemala, Jamaica, Morocco, Sierra Leone and Uganda. In addition, allocations have been increased for Guyana, from \$4.0 million to \$7.0 million; the Philippines, from \$25.0 million to \$31.0 million; and Sri Lanka, from \$16.0 million to \$26.0 million since the third quarterly report. Currently planned Food for Progress participants are Kenya, Madagascar, Nicaragua and Panama. To date, Nicaragua and Madagascar have signed Food for Progress agreements and Kenya and Panama are expected to do so during this fiscal year.

The revised allocations meet the legal requirement of Section III of P.L. 480, which directs that not less than 75 percent of the food commodities be allocated to friendly countries that meet the per capita income criterion for lending by the International Development Association. Currently the countries in this category are those with an annual per capita gross national product of \$1,070 or less.

Crowder said the program takes into account many variables including commodity and budget availabilities; changing economic and foreign policy situations, including human rights assessments; potential for market development; fluctuations in commodity prices; availability of handling, storage and distribution facilities; and possible disincentives to local production.

Since situations may develop which could cause a change in country and commodity allocations during the fiscal year, these allocations do not represent final U.S. commitments nor agreements with participating governments, although a number of Titles I/III agreement have been signed and all are expected to be signed shortly.

Title I of P.L. 480 is a concessional sales program designed to promote exports of agricultural commodities from the United States and to foster economic development in recipient countries. The program provides export credit of up to 40 years, with a grace period of up to 10 years and low interest rates.

Title III provides for the forgiveness of the debt incurred under Title I, based on accomplishments in food for development programs and projects agreed upon by the United States and recipient countries.

Food for Progress provides commodities to needy countries, on a grant or loan basis, to promote economic reform.

Additional technical information on the P.L. 480 and Food for Progress program is available from Mary Chambliss of USDA's Foreign Agricultural Service, (202) 447-3573.

Lynn K. Goldsbrough (202) 447-3448

#

USDA TO BAN SOME ELASTIC NETTING IN MEAT AND POULTRY PROCESSING

WASHINGTON, July 27—The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Food Safety and Inspection Service said today it will ban certain elastic netting currently being used by meat processors in the processing of cooked or smoked meat and poultry products.

Preliminary tests conducted by FSIS revealed chemicals in the netting react with nitrites in the meat to form an unacceptable level of dibutyl-nitrosamine, one of a class of compounds known to cause cancer in laboratory animals.

Dr. Lester M. Crawford, FSIS administrator, said cured meat processors will have until Aug. 13 to eliminate the netting, which is used to hold and shape the meat during the curing process.

Crawford emphasized that public exposure to products with this netting during that short time poses no significant health hazard.

A recent risk assessment of the nitrosamine formation in hams with this netting also confirmed a negligible risk to consumers, but that long term use of such products could pose a health risk.

Elastic netting manufacturers have been notified that the U.S. Food and Drug Administration considers these materials as unapproved indirect food additives. Premarket FDA approval is required for all direct and indirect food additives.

Alternate methods are available including the use of non-elastic netting, semi-permeable casing, or molds or presses to shape these cured meats.

Nitrites are used in cured meats to prevent the growth of harmful bacteria that cause botulism in humans and to give these meats desirable color and flavor. Nitrites are found naturally in some vegetables and the human body also makes nitrites from nitrate, another widespread natural compound.

FSIS also will begin testing for nitrosamines in those meat products that use the netting to determine actual nitrosamine levels. Products found to contain nitrosamines in excess of 10 parts per billion may be subject to regulatory action.

A similar FSIS testing program has been in effect since 1978 to monitor nitrosamine levels in bacon. And FDA also has set similar action levels for nitrosamines in some alcoholic beverages and in baby bottle nipples.

FSIS discovered the excess amounts of nitrosamines in the hams while reviewing a new curing process for pork products.

Jim Greene (202) 382-0314

#

CANADIAN FIRM RECALLS CACCIATORA SAUSAGE FROM 12 STATES AND DC

WASHINGTON, July 27—Venetian Salami Co. of Montreal, Canada, is voluntarily recalling all of its Cacciatora sausage distributed in 12 states and Washington, D.C., because the sausages may be contaminated with staphylococcus bacteria, according to Dr. Lester M. Crawford, administrator of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Food Safety and Inspection Service.

The sausages are sold in 7-ounce vacuum-packed plastic packages containing two sausages per pack, under two brand names: VENETIAN NOSTRANO manufactured by the Venetian Salami Co., Montreal, Quebec, Canada; and PRIMO, prepared for Primo Foods, Ltd., Woodbridge, Ontario, Canada;

The U.S. Department of Agriculture learned today that the sausages have been distributed to grocery stores and delicatessens in Arizona, California, Connecticut, Illinois, Massachusetts, Maryland, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Rhode Island, Virginia, and Washington, D.C.

The Canadian Health and Welfare Department warned Canadians yesterday not to consume the sausages because they were found to contain high levels of staphylococcus bacteria.

"Because Canadian officials have associated 25 illnesses with the sausages, we urge consumers not to eat the sausages but to return the product to the place they were purchased," said Crawford. "However, no U.S. illnesses have been reported."

Staphylococcus bacteria form a toxin that is not destroyed at normal cooking temperatures. Consumption of food contaminated with staphylococcus toxin can cause sudden and violent onset of nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea within two to four hours after consumption. Abdominal cramps, weakness and exhaustion are common. Depending on the severity of the reaction, the symptoms may last, in varying degrees, for one to two days.

Consumers with questions about the recall may phone the toll-free USDA Meat and Poultry Hotline at 1-800-535-4555. The hotline can be reached from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. (Eastern Time) Monday through Friday. At other times a recording with information about the recall will be provided. Callers in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area should call 447-3333. Both phone numbers provide access to a telecommunications device for the deaf.

FSIS ensures the safety of all meat and poultry products sold in interstate commerce—including products from other countries. FSIS inspection also ensures product wholesomeness and accuracy of labeling information.

Sharon Sachs (703) 548-1162

#

USDA RELEASES COST OF FOOD AT HOME FOR JUNE

WASHINGTON, July 30—Here is the U.S. Department of Agriculture's monthly update of the weekly cost of food at home for June 1990:

Chart follows

Cost of food at home for a week in June 1990

	-----Food plans-----			
	(In Dollars)			
	Thrifty	Low-cost	Moderate cost	Liberal
<hr/>				
Families:				
Family of 2 (20-50 years)	47.30	59.50	73.40	90.90
Family of 2 (51 years and over)	44.90	57.20	70.40	84.20
Family of 4 with preschool children	69.00	85.90	104.80	128.50
Family of 4 with elemen- tary schoolchildren	78.90	100.90	126.20	151.70
<hr/>				
Individuals in four-person families:				
Children:				
1-2 years	12.50	15.20	17.70	21.40
3-5 years	13.50	16.60	20.40	24.50
6-8 years	16.40	21.90	27.50	32.00
9-11 years	19.50	24.90	32.00	37.10
Females:				
12-19 years	20.50	24.40	29.60	35.70
20-50 years	20.40	25.30	30.70	39.10
51 and over	20.20	24.60	30.30	36.20
Males:				
12-14 years	20.40	28.20	35.20	41.30
15-19 years	21.20	29.20	36.20	42.00
20-50 years	22.60	28.80	36.00	43.50
51 and over	20.60	27.40	33.70	40.30
<hr/>				

USDA's Human Nutrition Information Service computes the cost of food at home for four food plans—thrifty, low-cost, moderate-cost, and liberal.

Sue Ann Ritchko, administrator of HNIS, said the plans consist of foods that provide well-balanced meals and snacks for a week.

In computing the costs, USDA assumes all food is bought at the store and prepared at home. Costs do not include alcoholic beverages, pet food, soap, cigarettes, paper goods, and other nonfood items bought at the store.

“USDA costs are only guides to spending,” Ritchko said. “Families may spend more or less, depending on such factors as where they buy their food, how carefully they plan and buy, whether some food is produced at home, what foods the family likes, and how much food is prepared at home.”

“Most families will find the moderate-cost or low-cost plan suitable,” she said. “The thrifty plan, which USDA uses to set the coupon allotment in the food stamp program, is for families who have tighter budgets. Families with unlimited resources might use the liberal plan.”

To use the chart to estimate your family’s food costs:

—For members eating all meals at home—or carried from home—use the amounts shown in the chart.

—For members eating some meals out, deduct 5 percent from the amount shown for each meal not eaten at home. Thus, for a person eating lunch out 5 days a week, subtract 25 percent, or one-fourth the cost shown.

—For guests, add 5 percent of the amount shown for the proper age group for each meal.

Costs in the second part of the chart are for individuals in four-person families. If your family has more or less than four, total the “individual” figures and make these adjustments, because larger families tend to buy and use food more economically than smaller ones:

—For a one-person family, add 20 percent.

—For a two-person family, add 10 percent.

—For a three-person family, add 5 percent.

—For a five- or six-person family, subtract 5 percent.

—For a family of seven or more, subtract 10 percent.

Details of the four family food plans are available from the Nutrition Education Division, HNIS, USDA, Federal Building, Hyattsville, Md. 20782.

Johna Pierce (301) 436-8617

#

GENETICALLY ENGINEERED POTATOES IN IDAHO TEST MAY PAVE WAY FOR SUPERSPUDS

WASHINGTON—Potatoes with new genes, now growing outdoors in an Idaho test plot, may give biotechnologists and potato breeders a new option for building superspuds of tomorrow, according to a U.S. Department of Agriculture scientist.

“We want to see if the genetically engineered potatoes—grown outdoors in real-world conditions—match the high quality of conventionally bred potatoes,” said plant physiologist William R. Belknap of USDA’s Agricultural Research Service. “We believe this is the first time genetically engineered potatoes will face that kind of test in this country.”

About 1,000 of the half-ounce experimental potatoes are planted on a half-acre plot at the University of Idaho’s Research and Extension Center in Aberdeen. They were produced in a greenhouse by plants grown from even tinier, laboratory-reared spuds called microtubers, which had been genetically engineered.

The new genes, called “markers,” are not useful to potatoes but enable the scientists to easily test gene insertion, said Belknap of ARS’ Process Biotechnology Research Unit, Albany, Calif.

“If we harvest high-quality potatoes with the new marker genes inside,” he said, “we’ll plan more outdoor experiments for next summer, with engineered potatoes that contain potentially useful genes.” Those genes might confer such traits as disease or bruise resistance, he said.

USDA’s Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service has issued a permit for the experiment. The scientists’ actions to ensure the marker genes stay within the test site will include fumigating to kill any potatoes inadvertently left after harvest this fall.

The harvested potatoes will be examined for yield, size, appearance and other factors, said ARS plant pathologist Dennis L. Corsini. “That includes the standard french fry test—although we won’t actually eat the potatoes,” added Corsini at the agency’s Small Grains and Potato Germplasm Research Unit in Aberdeen.

Besides Russet Burbank, America’s most widely planted variety, the gene-engineering test includes Lemhi Russet, developed by ARS research geneticist Joseph J. Pavek along with Corsini and others.

The experimental potatoes contain a gene, inserted into the engineered microtubers, that cues the plant to form an enzyme called

betaglucuronidase, or “GUS.” Potatoes normally contain very little of this enzyme.

Microtubers—small, round and white—are not new. But scientists working with Belknap at his Albany laboratory were apparently the first to use them to genetically engineer this crop.

To single out engineered potatoes that carry the GUS gene, scientists linked it to a gene that makes potatoes resistant to an antibiotic, kanamycin.

Microtubers, sliced into thin disks in the laboratory, are exposed to a bacterium containing the genes to be introduced. When placed in petri dishes with nutrients and kanamycin, only those disks containing cells that took up the gene for kanamycin resistance form healthy plantlets. In the greenhouse, these are nurtured into larger plants that produce the half-ounce spuds like those used in the outdoor experiment.

Greenhouse plants are checked for the GUS gene by grinding up leaves and other tissue, then exposing that sample to a chemical that will react with GUS to turn tissue a fluorescent green—visible under ultra-violet light (“black light”).

If the test potatoes develop normally outdoors, underground stems will grow from the eyes to produce a leafy plant. New potatoes will form at tips of stolons, lateral extensions from the underground stems. Scientists will harvest and scrutinize those potatoes in the fall.

In addition to the gene-engineering experiment, Corsini and Pavek are testing more than 125,000 other experimental potato plants—from conventional breeding—this summer at Aberdeen. The location’s potato breeding program is North America’s largest—a joint effort of ARS, the University of Idaho and breeders in several western states since 1950, Corsini said.

Marcia Wood (415) 559-6070

Issued: July 30, 1990

#

USDA ANNOUNCES PREVAILING WORLD MARKET RICE PRICES

WASHINGTON, July 31—Acting Under Secretary of Agriculture John B. Campbell today announced the prevailing world market prices of milled rice, loan rate basis, as follows:

- long grain whole kernels, 8.36 cents per pound;
- medium grain whole kernels, 7.48 cents per pound;
- short grain whole kernels, 7.41 cents per pound;
- broken kernels, 4.18 cents per pound.

Based upon these prevailing world market prices for milled rice, rough rice world prices are estimated to be:

- long grain, \$5.25 per hundredweight;
- medium grain, \$4.82 per hundredweight;
- short grain, \$4.79 per hundredweight.

The prices announced are effective today at 3 p.m. EDT. The next scheduled price announcement will be made August 7 at 3 p.m. EDT, although prices may be announced sooner if warranted.

Gene Rosera (202) 447-7923

#

USDA SIGNS COOPERATIVE AGREEMENT WITH UTAH STATE ON ANIMAL DAMAGE CONTROL

WASHINGTON, July 31—The U.S. Department of Agriculture has signed a cooperative agreement with Utah State University in Logan to develop an undergraduate and graduate degree program that incorporates wildlife damage management into its curriculum.

James W. Glosser, administrator of USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, said "This program will help develop an appreciation of the impact of wildlife depredation on agriculture and the importance of wildlife damage management. In addition, it will help provide better trained personnel throughout the wildlife profession."

Glosser said that under the agreement, APHIS' Animal Damage Control program will cooperate with Utah State in carrying out the project, provide funding for the program, and provide ADC personnel as guest lecturers. Bobby Acord, deputy administrator for ADC, will serve as its representative.

In turn, Utah State has agreed to develop an academic program within its Fisheries and Wildlife Department that incorporates wildlife damage management and to develop courses that lead to undergraduate and graduate degree programs in problem wildlife management. Professor John Kadlec will serve as Utah State University's representative.

"We hope the cooperative program not only will train Utah State University students in the principles and practices of problem wildlife management, but will aid in creating a better informed public in the area of wildlife damage management," said Glosser.

The agreement may be renewed through Sept. 30, 1995.

Alicia Ford (301) 436-7799

#

FGIS SOYBEAN TESTING PROGRAM RIGHT ON TARGET

WASHINGTON, July 31—A review of the Federal Grain Inspection Service's year-old soybean oil and protein testing program shows that the program's services are accurate and reliable, FGIS Administrator John C. Foltz said today.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture agency compared results of field tests with reference chemical determinations of oil and protein content for the same soybean samples. The chemical analyses were performed at the FGIS Technical Center in Kansas City, Mo.

The comparison showed good overall agreement between test results in field offices and the Technical Center laboratory. Standard deviations of the differences were only 0.43% for protein and 0.36% for oil. The study indicates 95 percent of official inspection results obtained in field offices, which are determined by near infrared methods, virtually agree with results obtained by chemical reference methods.

"The official grain inspection system's soybean oil and protein testing service is an excellent program which provides valuable end-use quality information," said Foltz. "Foreign customers are encouraged to use this service on the soybeans they order. We are now capable of assuring them the quality they seek."

For further information on soybean oil and protein testing services or research, contact David Funk at (816) 374-6518.

Dana Blatt (202) 382-0378

#

DAIRY FARMERS APPROVE ESTABLISHING CAROLINA FEDERAL MILK MARKETING ORDER

WASHINGTON, Aug. 1—Over two-thirds of the dairy producers voting in a recent referendum in North Carolina and South Carolina approved establishing a federal marketing order for their milk, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

USDA had recommended establishing the marketing order in June, contingent on the outcome of the referendum. The Agricultural Marketing Agreement Act of 1937, which authorizes federal milk marketing orders, permits an order to become effective if over two-thirds of those voting in a referendum approve it.

Daniel D. Haley, administrator of USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service, said the new marketing order will begin limited operation Aug. 1, when the volume of milk farmers deliver to plants begins being reported, and full operation Sept. 1, when the milk is priced and farmers begin being paid under the order.

Haley said initiatives for establishing the marketing order came from 10 cooperative associations representing approximately 90 percent of the milk producers associated with the Carolina market.

USDA held an extended hearing on these initiatives April 17-25, 1989, in Charlotte, N.C., and reopened Aug. 22, 1989, in Alexandria, ■a.

The primary milk consumption areas in the two states include Charlotte, Greensboro, Winston-Salem, Raleigh, Durham, Asheville, and Fayetteville in North Carolina, and Columbia, Charleston, and Greenville in South Carolina.

Haley said the federal marketing order will resolve milk supply problems in these states. North Carolina has regulated its milk production under a state order, and South Carolina has had no milk marketing regulations in recent years. The federal order will attempt to improve the balance of supply and demand in the entire area, with special circumstances spelled out to deal with uses of milk in oversupply and to

encourage delivery of milk to bottling plants as needed, activity common to all federal milk marketing orders.

The new order will install principles common to other orders, Haley said. Its major provisions will:

- adopt a three-class system of payments for milk, according to how it is used, with milk sold for drinking (Class I) getting the highest price, milk sold for soft milk products (Class II) getting a lower price, and that sold for hard milk products like butter, hard cheese and dried milk (Class III) the lowest price;

- establish pooling standards for the plants in the order, stipulating how much milk must be shipped to or received by these plants for them and the farmers supplying them to qualify for the benefits of regulation under the order;

- set minimum prices regulated handlers must pay for milk used in each class;

- compute minimum uniform prices regulated handlers must pay dairy farmers under market-wide pooling, the process whereby prices paid farmers reflect an averaging of prices paid for all uses of milk in the entire marketing order area; and

- establish a “base-excess” plan whereby production in months of average or short supply would be used in setting a monthly base, and whereby prices in the other months of heavier production for milk in excess of the base could vary downwards. This plan would encourage farmers to level out their production throughout the year, thus minimizing disposal problems caused by seasonal oversupply.

The order also will establish payment procedures to be followed by regulated handlers; and, as in all federal orders, it will cover the cost of administering the order with a monthly assessment of milk handlers. In this case, handlers will be assessed not more than four cents per hundredweight of the milk they purchase under the order.

The new order would adjust milk prices for butterfat content, as in most federal milk orders.

Notice of the outcome of the referendum and of details about the new order will be published in the Aug. 2 Federal Register. Copies may be obtained from Arnold M. Stallings, market administrator, P.O. Box 18030, Louisville, Ky. 40218-0030, or the Dairy Division, Order

Formulation Branch, USDA, AMS, Rm. 2968-S, P.O. Box 96456,
Washington, D.C. 20090-6456; telephone (202) 447-6273.

Clarence Steinberg (202) 447-6179

#

CYSTIC FIBROSIS RESEARCH MAY GIVE CLUE TO PREVENTING PLANT DISEASE

WASHINGTON, Aug. 1—Bacteria that cause plant diseases share a common trait with those causing chronic lung infections in humans with cystic fibrosis, according to U.S. Department of Agriculture scientists. And it could be their Achilles heel.

Two species of *Pseudomonas* bacteria produce a compound called alginic acid while growing inside plants. This same compound is produced by a third *Pseudomonas* species in cystic fibrosis patients, said William F. Fett, a plant pathologist with USDA's Agricultural Research Service.

He and colleagues at the agency's Eastern Regional Research Center in Philadelphia hope to build on knowledge of the human infection to prevent plant disease. The USDA estimates that more than \$131 billion of world crop production is lost to plant disease.

The plant-infecting species, which can cause dead areas on plant leaves and rotting of fruits and vegetables, are *P. viridiflava* and *P. syringae*. The human infection is caused by *P. aeruginosa*.

"We believe that production of alginic acid is necessary for sustained growth of the bacteria in susceptible plants, leading to the full expression of disease symptoms," said Fett. "It appears that the compound forms a coating which can act as a sponge to hold water for use by the bacteria. This coating may also allow the bacteria to escape detection and protect them from certain plant defense mechanisms.

When checking to see what makes *Pseudomonas* tick, Fett came across extensive medical research about the bacterium in cystic fibrosis patients.

"There is strong medical evidence that the coating of alginic acid around cells of *P. aeruginosa* in the lungs of cystic fibrosis patients counteracts human defense mechanisms and also forms a barrier to penetration of certain antibiotics," he added.

The medical studies reviewed by Fett showed how alginic acid is produced and regulated by *P. aeruginosa* and may be a key to preventing plant disease.

He and colleagues are collaborating with a group of scientists at the University of Illinois College of Medicine at Chicago on the use of modern genetic tools to study the importance of alginic acid production in plant disease.

“These medical studies will facilitate the work with the plant pathogenic bacteria,” Fett said.

He hopes this research will eventually lead to new disease controls, such as specific chemical inhibitors of alginic acid production or plants genetically engineered to contain enzymes that can degrade alginic acid as it is formed by the bacteria during early infection. These enzymes are known to be produced by seaweeds as well as by certain microorganisms and marine animals, Fett said.

P. syringae causes dead areas on leaves of susceptible plants. Severe infections can cause leaves to fall off, resulting in lower crop yields. *P. viridiflava* can attack plants before and after harvest, causing soft rotting of various fruits and vegetables after harvest. They enter plants through natural openings or wounds, he said. As a group, these bacteria can attack hundreds of different plants from fruit trees to vegetables and field crops, Fett said.

“Once inside, they produce substances that make the plant membranes become leaky, resulting in the release of water and nutrients into the spaces between plant cells where the bacteria reside,” Fett said.

Bruce Kinzel (301) 344-2739

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FEDERAL GOVERNMENT TO ESTABLISH RURAL DEVELOPMENT COUNCILS

WASHINGTON, Aug. 1—Secretary of Agriculture Clayton Yeutter today announced that Rural Development Councils will be formed in all 50 states and territories to develop strategies for cooperative actions by federal agencies, in support of state governments and private enterprise, to promote rural economic development.

Yeutter, chairman of the White House Economic Policy Council's Working Group on Rural Development, said the councils, as recommended in the President's Initiative on Rural Economic Development, will work to establish state-level partnerships between federal and state governments and the private sector. The participants will create a long-term strategy for applying federal rural development resources and will carry out joint actions to implement the strategy.

"Ultimately, I expect these councils to result in the creation of comprehensive approaches to rural development within each state and territory," Yeutter said.

Yeutter said the project will be launched this summer in Kansas, Maine, Mississippi, Oregon, South Carolina, South Dakota, Texas and Washington. Using existing resources, each council will be staffed by a full-time state coordinator and supported by a national rural development institute.

"Global economic changes have affected rural industries in fundamental ways," Yeutter said. "Our job in government is to apply the resources we have at our command to help the people in rural areas, their communities and their industries, adjust to those changes."

All federal departments and agencies with significant responsibilities in rural development will participate in the councils.

Printed copy of a backgrounder can be obtained from the USDA's Office of Small Community and Rural Development. Telephone: (202) 447-4581.

Kelly Shipp (202) 447-4623

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USDA DECLARES EMERGENCY IN CALIFORNIA BECAUSE OF MEXICAN FRUIT FLY

WASHINGTON, Aug. 1—Secretary of Agriculture Clayton Yeutter has declared an emergency to provide funding to eradicate two Mexican fruit fly infestations in Los Angeles and San Diego Counties in California.

"The Mexican fruit fly is a dangerous plant pest that could pose a serious threat to California's agricultural economy if not contained," Yeutter said. "The establishment of this pest in the United States could cost \$539 million a year due to the loss of export markets."

The Mexican fruit fly is one of the most destructive pests of many kinds of fruits and vegetables, especially citrus and stone fruits. If it became established in California, annual control costs in that state alone would be \$100 million. If established in California and Florida, the pest could cost those states' citrus industries between \$3.2 and \$4.6 billion a year.

Since May 1, five Mexican fruit flies have been found in Los Angeles and San Diego Counties, triggering a cooperative eradication effort by USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service and the California Department of Food and Agriculture. As part of the eradication effort, APHIS is releasing millions of sterile Mexican fruit flies weekly. Eventually, the fly will breed itself out of existence.

The fruit fly's life cycle—between 21 and 30 days in the summer—is short, so it reproduces quickly. Infestations can spread quickly, causing significant losses. Female fruit flies lay eggs inside ripe fruits and vegetables, and the developing larvae feed on the pulp of these plant hosts and destroy their commercial and nutritive values.

The declaration of emergency was published in the July 30 Federal Register.

Anita K. Brown (301) 436-5931

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CCC INTEREST RATE FOR AUGUST LOWERED TO 8 PERCENT

WASHINGTON, Aug. 1—Commodity loans disbursed in August by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Commodity Credit Corporation will carry an 8 percent interest rate, according to Keith Bjerke, executive vice president of the CCC.

The 8 percent interest rate is down from July's 8-1/8 percent and reflects the interest rate charged CCC by the U.S. Treasury in August.

Robert Feist (202) 447-6789

#

SNEAD SWORN IN AS USDA INSPECTOR GENERAL

WASHINGTON, Aug. 1—Leon Snead was sworn in today as the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Inspector General by Secretary of Agriculture Clayton Yeutter.

“Leon has 25 years experience and he has worked in six federal departments and agencies. He has done excellent work at USDA as acting inspector general, and I am pleased to swear him in today after his Senate confirmation last week,” said Yeutter.

Snead has served as acting inspector general at USDA since 1988. Prior to this, he was USDA deputy inspector general (1986-1988), and the assistant inspector general for auditing at the National Aeronautics and Space Administration. President George Bush announced his intention to nominate Snead to be USDA Inspector General last October. He received Senate confirmation last Friday, July 27.

The inspector general conducts and supervises all audits and investigations relating to the programs and operations of the department. The Office of Inspector General was established administratively by the secretary of agriculture in 1962. The Inspector General Act of 1978 (5 U.S.C. app.) created statutory inspectors general in the Department of Agriculture and a number of other federal executive departments and independent agencies.

Snead graduated from Spencercian College (B.A., 1963) and the University of Baltimore (J.D., 1969). He is a Georgia native and currently resides in Potomac, Md. He is married and has three children.

Kelly Shipp (202) 447-4623

#

PRIVATE EXPORTERS REPORT SALES ACTIVITY FOR CHINA

WASHINGTON, Aug. 1—Private exporters today reported to the U.S. Department of Agriculture export sales of 210,000 metric tons of hard red winter wheat for delivery to China during the 1990-91 marketing year.

The marketing year for wheat began June 1.

USDA issues both daily and weekly export sales reports to the public. Exporters are required to report to USDA export sales of 100,000 metric tons or more of one commodity, made in one day, to one destination by

3:00 PM eastern time on the next business day following the sale. Export sales of less than these quantities must be reported to USDA on a weekly basis.

Thomas B. McDonald (202) 447-3273

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COMMENT PERIOD ON INSPECTION OF CANADIAN MEAT AND POULTRY IMPORTS TO REOPEN

WASHINGTON, Aug.1—The U.S. Department of Agriculture will reopen, through Sept. 5, the comment period on a proposal that would allow a one-year experiment exempting Canadian meat and poultry products from reinspection at the border. This proposal would help implement the United States-Canada Free Trade Agreement.

“We have received several requests to lengthen the comment period beyond the 30 days in the initial proposal,” said Dr. Lester M. Crawford, administrator of USDA’s Food Safety and Inspection Service. “Since we are seeking substantive comments that will assist us in thoroughly reviewing this proposal, we will honor those requests by re-opening the comment period for an additional 30 days.”

“We want to ease trade restrictions between the two countries and still maintain the highest standards for safety and wholesomeness of meat and poultry imports,” continued Crawford. Under the proposal, Canadian products would still be thoroughly inspected at slaughter and processing plants in Canada, under a system that is nearly identical to the U.S. inspection system. However, products would no longer be sampled randomly at the border during the experiment planned for later this year.

Both countries would continue to track export shipments once they left the slaughter or processing plant. For example, a Canadian shipment destined for the United States would include pertinent information such as the type of product, number of boxes or carcasses, total weight, label registration and the authorization number issued by the Canadian government. This information also would be transmitted to an FSIS Import Field Office where it can be checked for accuracy with the incoming shipment. A similar procedure would be in place for U.S. shipments destined for Canada.

The proposed experiment would be expected to facilitate trade and ease some paperwork requirements for U.S. companies exporting meat and

poultry to Canada. For example, shipments would be required to carry a new export stamp that would simplify procedures currently used to ship products to Canada.

The initial proposal appeared in the June 29 Federal Register. Notice of the re-opening of the comment period will be published in the Aug. 6 Federal Register.

Written comments should be sent to: Policy Office, ATTN: Linda Carey, FSIS Hearing Clerk, Rm 3171-S, FSIS, USDA, Washington, D.C. 20250. Oral comments should be directed to Ms. Patricia Stolfa at (202) 447-3473.

Jim Greene (202) 382-0314

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**THIS WEEK’S HONEY-LOAN REPAYMENT LEVELS
UNCHANGED**

WASHINGTON, Aug. 2—Producers may repay their 1989 honey price-support loans at the following levels, according to Keith D. Bjerke, executive vice president of the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Commodity Credit Corporation:

Weekly Honey-loan Repayment Levels, color and class, cents per pound, 1989 crop Table

White	40.0
Extra-light Amber	37.0
Light Amber	36.0
Amber	35.0
Nontable	33.0

The weekly repayment level for 1990-crop honey is 38.0 cents per pound for all colors, table and nontable grades.

Levels are unchanged from those announced last week.

Producers who redeem their honey pledged as loan collateral by repaying their honey-price support loans at these levels may not repledge the same honey as collateral for another loan.

Jane K. Phillips (202) 447-7601 8:00 am-4:30 pm EST
John C. Ryan (202) 447-8207 4:30 pm-5:30 pm EST

